

## CLAIMS

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1. (original) Dye-containing pellet, characterized in that it is obtained by homogeneous mixing of at least one natural and/or synthetic dye-containing starting material with a suitable carrier material, followed by coating with a suitable encapsulation material.
2. (original) Dye-containing pellet, characterized in that it is obtained by coating a suitable carrier material with a mixture of at least one natural and/or synthetic dye and at least one suitable encapsulation material.
3. (original) Pellet as defined in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the carrier material is selected from among polyvinylpyrrolidones, dextrose, oligosaccharides, microcrystalline cellulose derivatives, physically or chemically modified starches or starch derivatives, synthetic calcium silicate, diatomite, silicon dioxide, or other free-flowing, non-baking powders.
4. (currently amended) Pellet as defined in ~~one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, characterized in that the carrier material is selected from among polyvinylpyrrolidone, dextrose, oligosaccharides, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose, methylcellulose, hydroxyethylcellulose, hydroxypropylcellulose, nonoxynol-hydroxyethylcellulose, cetylhydroxyethylcellulose and nonionic starch derivatives modified with propylene oxide.
5. (currently amended) Pellet as defined in ~~one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, characterized in that the encapsulating material is selected from among cellulose derivatives, polyethylene dispersions, polyacrylic acids, polyvinyl alcohols, polyvinylpyrrolidones, polycarbonates, polyesters, polyamides or natural film-formers.
6. (original) Pellet as defined in claim 5, characterized in that the natural film-former is selected from among chitosan, shellac, oligosaccharides or colophony.
7. (currently amended) Pellet as defined in ~~one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, characterized in that the dye is selected from among oxidation dye precursors and direct dyes.

8. (currently amended) Pellet as defined in ~~one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, characterized in that the dye is selected from among 2,5-diaminotoluene, 2,4-diaminophenoxyethanol, resorcinol, 2-methyl-resorcinol, m-aminophenol, 4-amino-m-cresol, 4-amino-2-hydroxytoluene, 6-amino-m-cresol, 2-amino-4-hydroxyethylamino-anisol, 1-naphthol, hydroxyethyl-3,4-methylenedioxyaniline, 2,5-diamino-phenylethanol, N,N-bis-(2-hydroxyethyl)-p-phenylenediamine, phenylmethylpyrazolone, 1-hydroxyethyl-4,5-diaminopyrazole and 2-amino-6-chloro-4-nitro-phenol or the salts thereof.

9. (currently amended) Pellet as defined in ~~one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, characterized in that the dye is selected from among hydroxyethyl-2-nitro-p-toluidine, 2-hydroxyethylpicramic acid, 4-nitrophenylaminourea, Basic Violet 2, Disperse Violet 1, HC Blue No. 2, HC Blue No. 12, HC Red No. 13, HC Red No. 3, 4-amino-3-nitrophenol, 4-[(2-hydroxyethyl)amino]-3-nitrophenol, HC Red No. 10, HC Red No. 11, 2-chloro-6-ethylamino-4-nitrophenol, 2-amino-6-chloro-4-nitrophenol, HC Yellow No. 13, Basic Blue No. 99, Basic Brown No. 16, Basic Brown No. 17, Basic Red No. 76, Basic Yellow No. 57 and 2,6-diamino-3-[(pyridin-3-yl)azo]pyridine and the salts thereof.

10. (currently amended) Agent for coloring keratin fibers obtained by mixing at least one dye-containing pellet as defined in ~~one of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1 with an aqueous or aqueous-alcoholic preparation.

11. (original) Agent as defined in claim 10, characterized in that the aqueous or aqueous-alcoholic preparation is selected from among water, mixtures of water and C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alcohols, hydrogen peroxide solutions or hydrogen peroxide emulsions, hair cleaning agents, hair conditioners and hair-firming agents.

12. (currently amended) Use of a dye-containing pellet as defined in ~~one of claims 4 to 9~~ claim 1 for preparing a colorant for keratin fibers.